THE TOPANGA CANYON TIE-DYED EMPORIUM

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In the fall of 1968, we had a notion to open a "tie-dyed Emporium out in the very heart of upscale Hippy Land, at the time, it seemed like a good idea at the time but it seems that our business plan was doomed from its conception as that generation's Hippies didn’t have money and while their political guru, Jerry Rubin, was making millions with his book, "Steal this Book." Seine contents had not, what

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Zappa called, the phony hippy possers spent their parent's allowances/College Tuition on fake beards, wigs, beads and that book, we would have made a killing - not a real killing but financially, need to be careful how I phrase this as "Good Time" Charlie and his band of murderous kooks were running wild in the canyon, in those days. Regrettably, my recollection of that period is not as vivid as I

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would prefer; however, I often reflect on the wisdom imparted by Momma Cass, who frequently remarked, *"The more you remember, the worse time you actually had!"*

This assertion has always struck me as a profound observation, one that I have found difficult to dispute.

Indeed, I can recall instances that align with this sentiment more often than I would care to

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acknowledge, and I have consistently provided testimony regarding these experiences in the various legal proceedings that arose during those years.
Seine and I had established a highly prosperous gentlemen's club in post-war Berlin, dedicating much of the 20th century to orchestrating intricate schemes and dubious financial exploits targeting affluent individuals, while deliberately avoiding the

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impoverished and unfortunate. However, we had never explored the realm of legitimate retail operations, which necessitated a level of financial accountability that was foreign to us.
This venture was outside our area of expertise, and lacking any formal education in business management, we quickly realized that we were ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of retail management, leading us to feel

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overwhelmed by the challenges we faced.
The inspiration drawn from Jerry Rubin's literary work led to an influx of enthusiastic young individuals, often referred to as "hippies," who descended upon our trendy boutique shoplifting with an intensity reminiscent of locusts swarming over a freshly harvested cornfield. This phenomenon resulted in our inventory being depleted at an

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astonishingly rapid pace, raising concerns about the sustainability of our stock levels.
In reflecting on my initial reaction, thinking back to the tumultuous period we experienced in Havana, which coincided with the onset of social unrest as the Great Depression made its way to the city in 1931, esd to bring my World War I Luger pistol and an ample supply of ammunition.
My intention was to assertively

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deter looters by shooting at the first few shoplifters that I encountered each morning. When Seine expressed his disapproval, arguing that the current context of Los Angeles, despite its imperfections, was not comparable to the chaos of Havana in 1931, I reassured him that my aim would be to merely nick them unless they were habitual thieves. However, shortly thereafter, my

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firearm mysteriously vanished. The absence of a robust anti-looting policy in retail establishments, coupled with a lack of vigilance from local law enforcement regarding shoplifting—comparable to their scrutiny of drug-related offenses—has led to a precarious situation for businesses.
As the pressure from avaricious bankers at the Western Savings Credit and Savings Union

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intensified, alongside the aggressive demands from merchandise vendors threatening legal action for unpaid merchandise, we found ourselves compelled to vacate our retail space.

In a hurried effort to salvage our remaining assets, we loaded the last of our inventory into the back of our aging Volkswagen Van, making a swift departure toward the Mexican border, hopefully,

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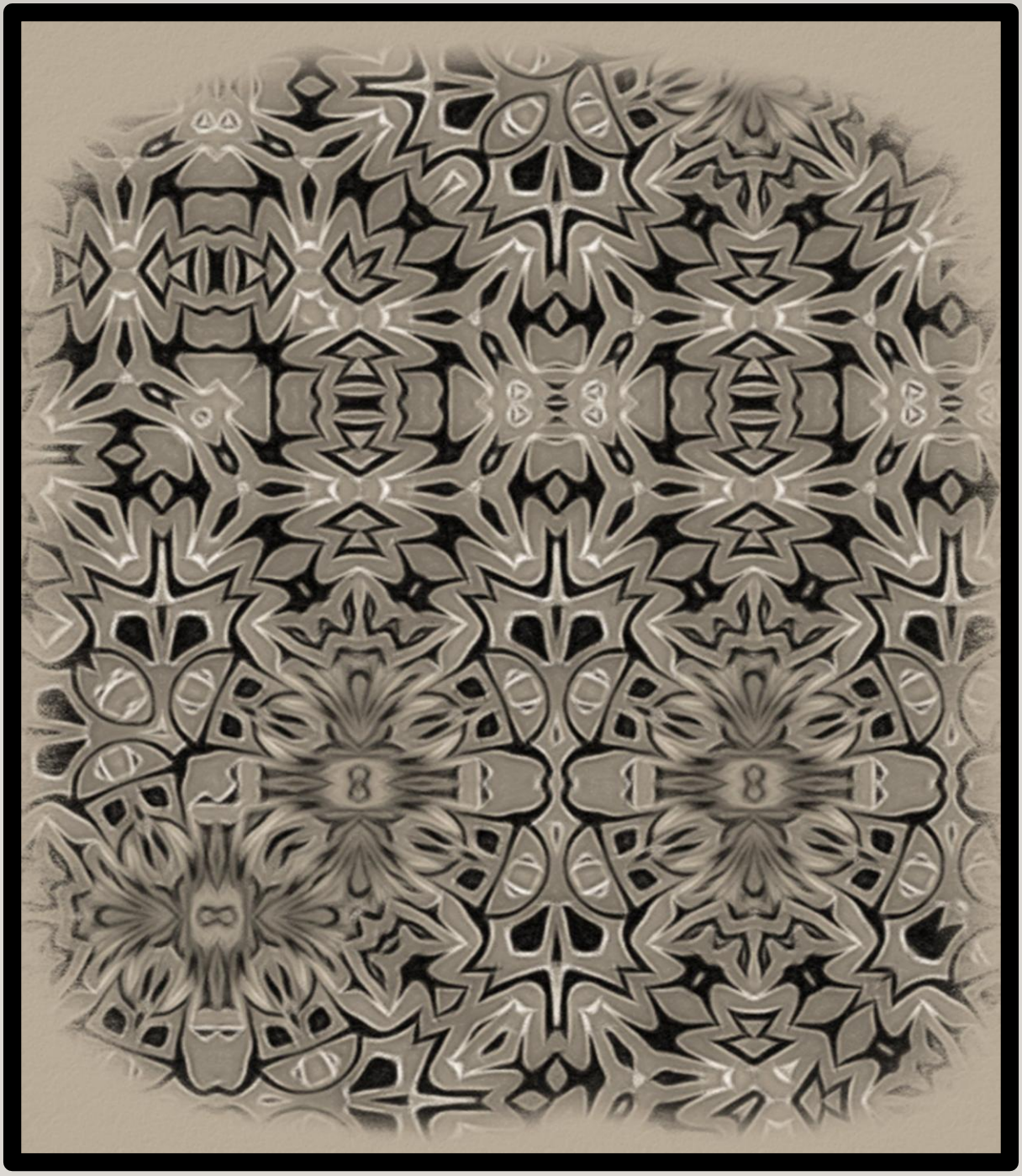

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long before they noticed us gone. Subsequently, we came to realize that we had overlooked a significant opportunity, one that was well understood by those more attuned to the business landscape: "Business Insurance." Had we been aware of its potential, we might have found ourselves in a position of considerable wealth, able to reside in an opulent condominium adjacent to Old Doc F's, enjoying

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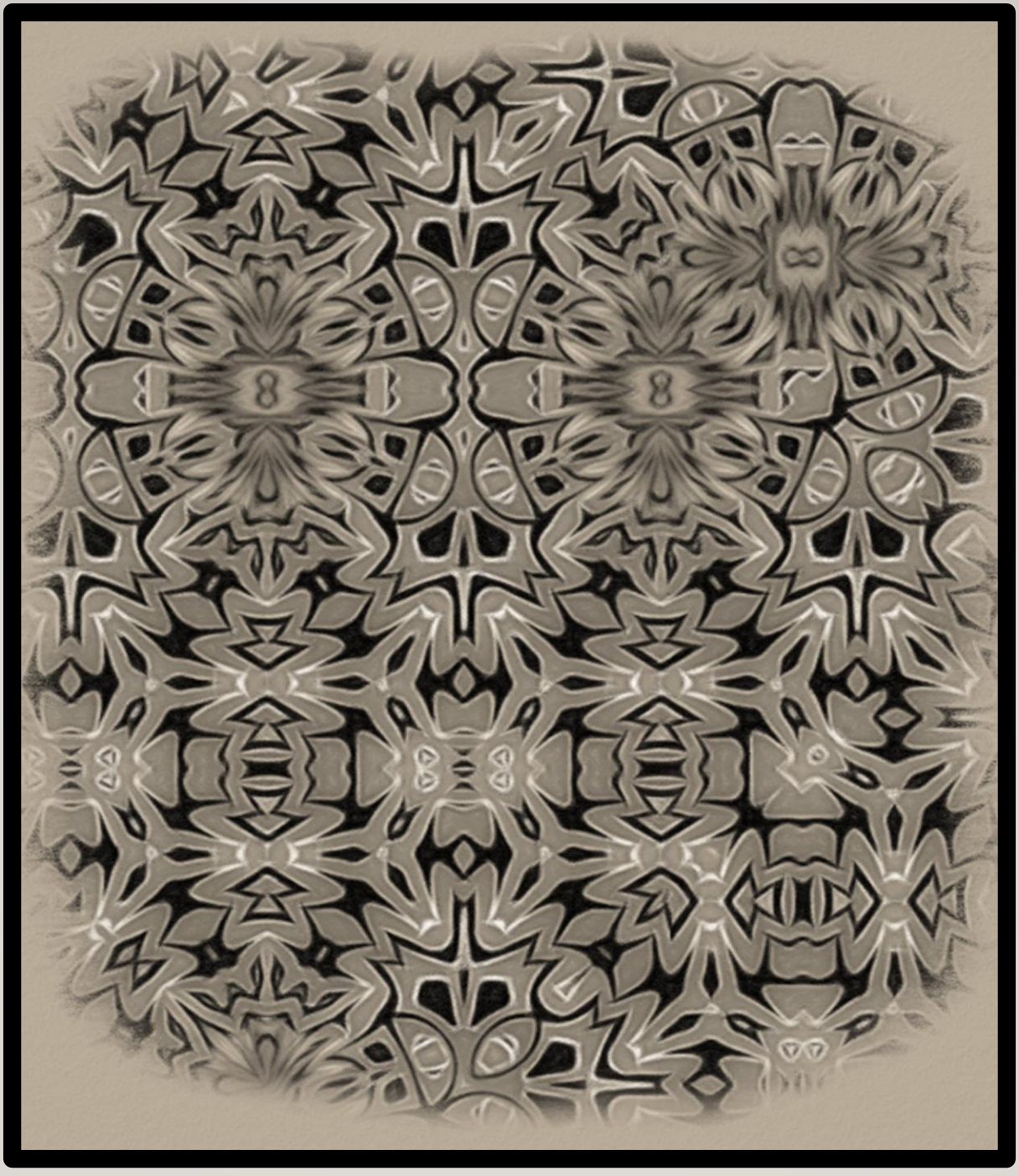

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the stunning vistas of the Shanghai Harbor.
The recollection of Seine's astute observations remains vivid in my mind, particularly during the moment we realized that we could have classified unsold inventory as a total loss for insurance claims, based on the full recommended retail price rather than our actual acquisition cost.
As he pondered this revelation, he lifted his gaze from the nearly

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depleted bottle of his homemade Cuban rum, a product of the he KitKat Gentleman's Club and Laundromat's brewing efforts, and uttered a rather cynical remark: *"What could have been or should have been is irrelevant; if your grandmother had possessed male genitalia, she would have been your grandfather."*
Otherwise, it doesn't matter, now! Our inexperience in the retail sector led us to underestimate the

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significance of insurance, as well as the ways in which other retailers were profiting from what can be perceived as an insurance scheme.

The mechanism behind this practice involves placing all unsellable merchandise prominently at the front of the store, a strategy supported by research indicating that shoplifters, who differ from genuine lotters, tend to target

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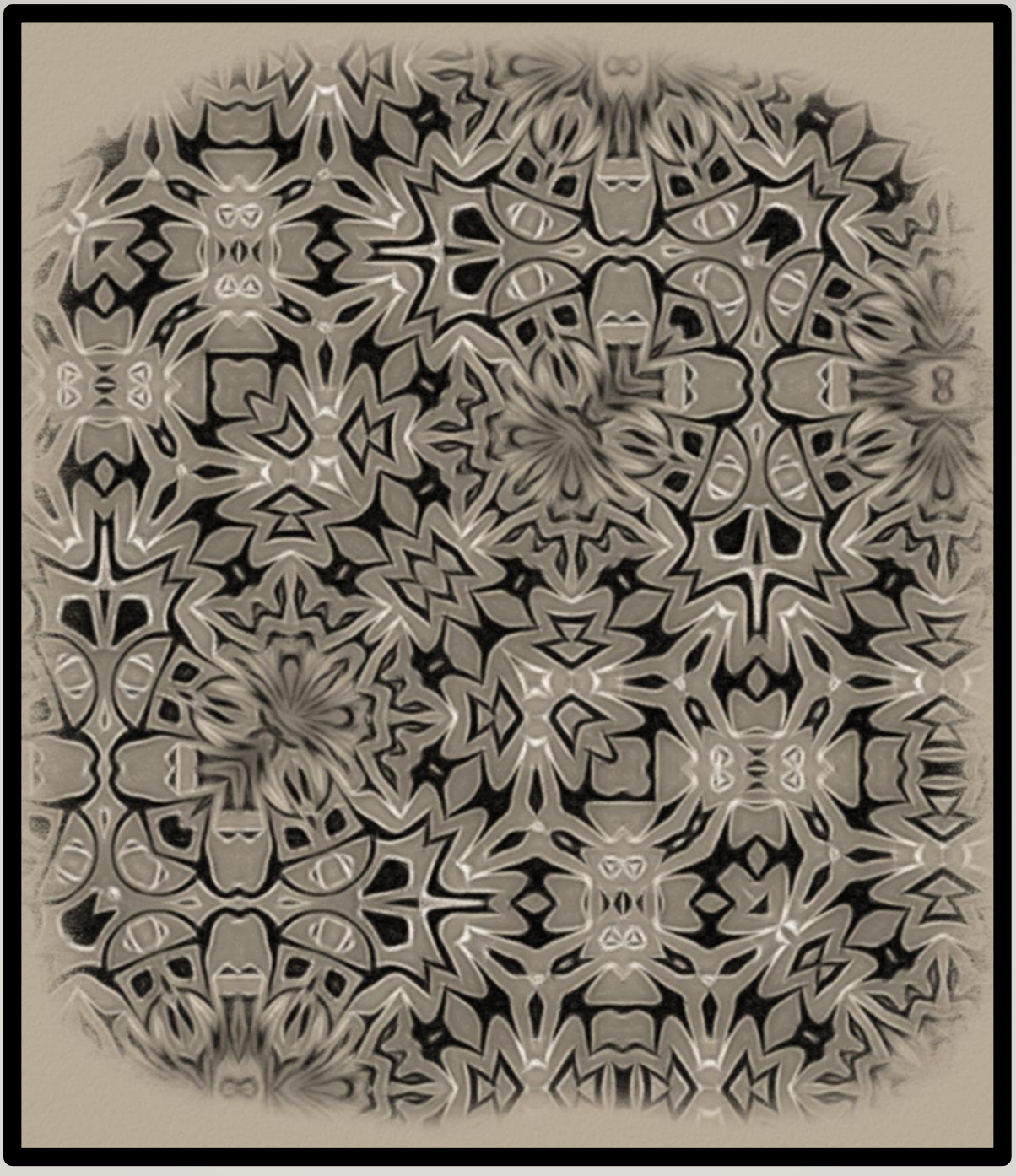

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items that are easily accessible near the exit.
In the retail sector, a prevalent adage emphasizes the futility of holding onto unsold stock:
"You can't eat inventory!"
This principle became particularly evident through our experiences. Rather than suffering significant financial losses by retaining excess personal investment in inventory, a strategic approach was adopted by positioning low-value items in

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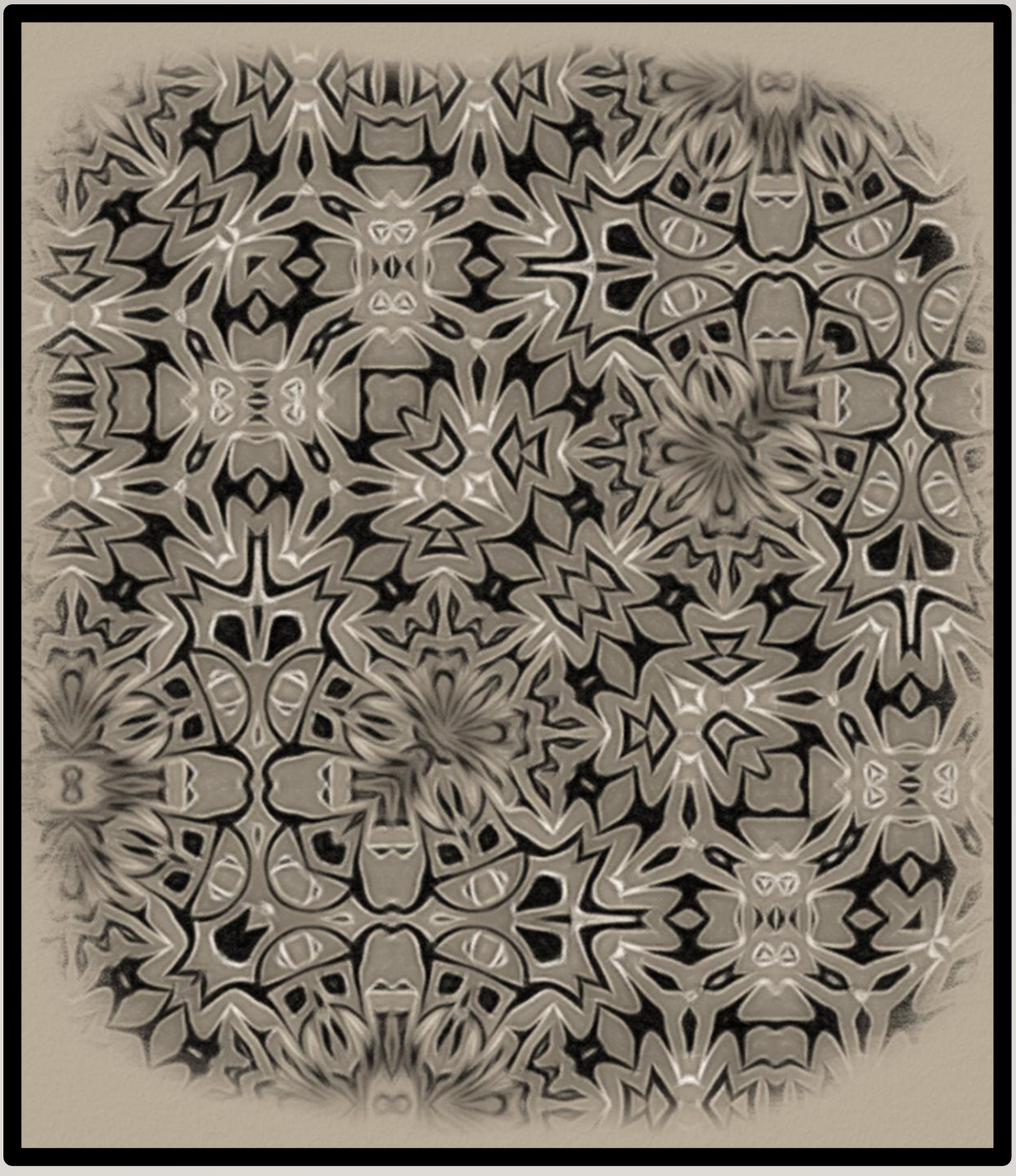

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close proximity to the entrance of the store.
When shoplifters inevitably swarm the establishment, they seize these easily accessible, low-cost goods.
Subsequently, the retailer can file an insurance claim based on the "suggested retail value" of the stolen items, often resulting in a financial windfall that can potentially double or even triple the initial investment.

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This method exemplifies a rather ingenious, albeit ethically questionable, strategy within the retail landscape -otherwise, the perfect scam!

Seine may possess a valid perspective, yet upon reflecting on this matter recently, I endeavored to engage him in a discussion about revisiting the topic.

Unfortunately, my efforts were met with disappointment when

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he informed me that the law now permits the theft of items valued up to $1,000 USD.
Undeterred and always eager to seize an opportunity, I adjusted my proposal to suggest that we could form groups comprising socially conscious individuals, substance users, and unemployed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion instructors to engage in theft, subsequently selling the stolen goods through ElCraigo's Tijuana

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Listings or the E-Beater's Bargain Website from the relative safety of Mexico.
However, Seine once again extinguished my fleeting aspirations of rapid financial gain by asserting that we had already missed the boat on that venture, even mentioning that our local congressman had been implicated in this scheme, albeit indirectly, through the ruthless operatives of the local cartel.

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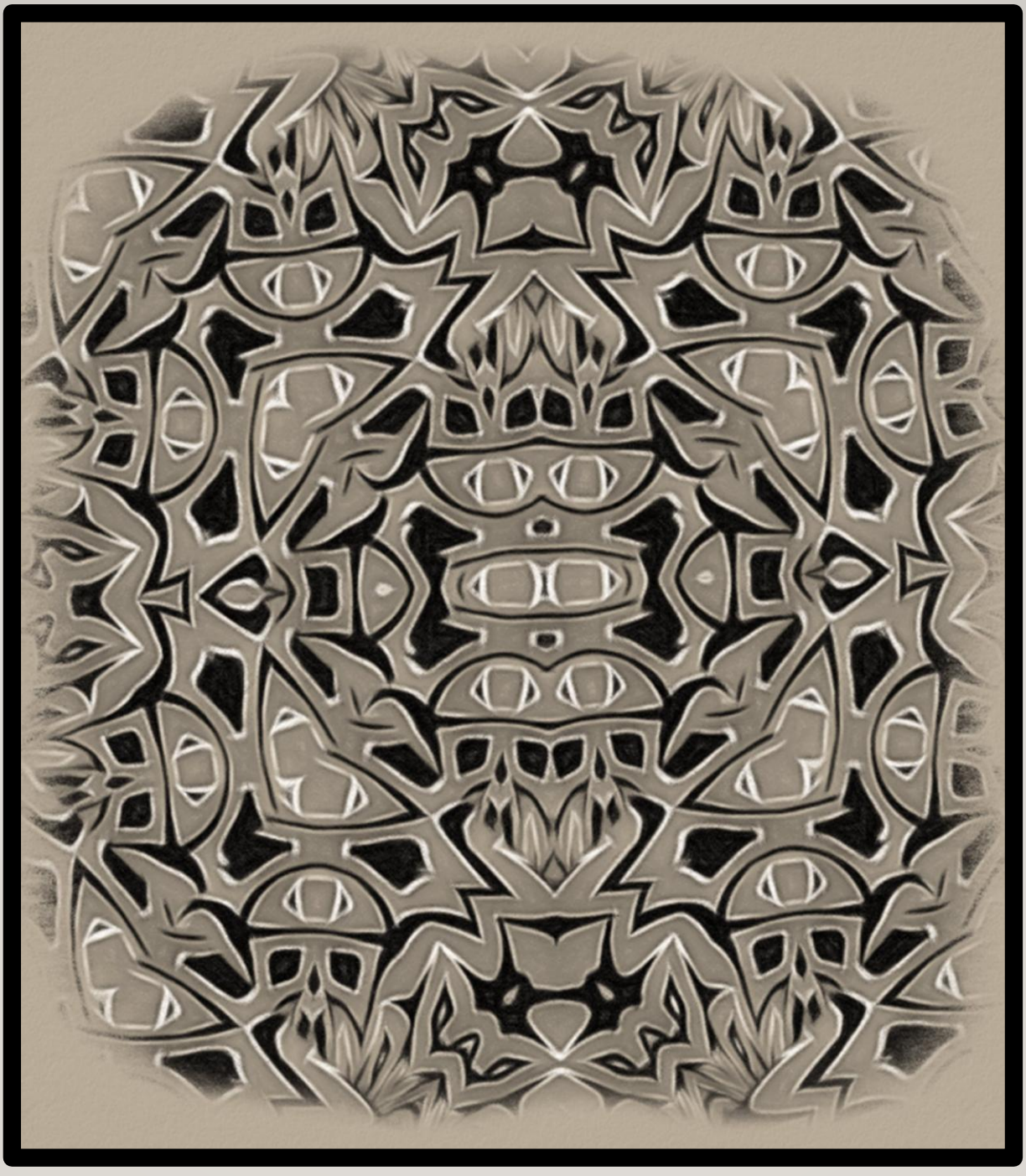

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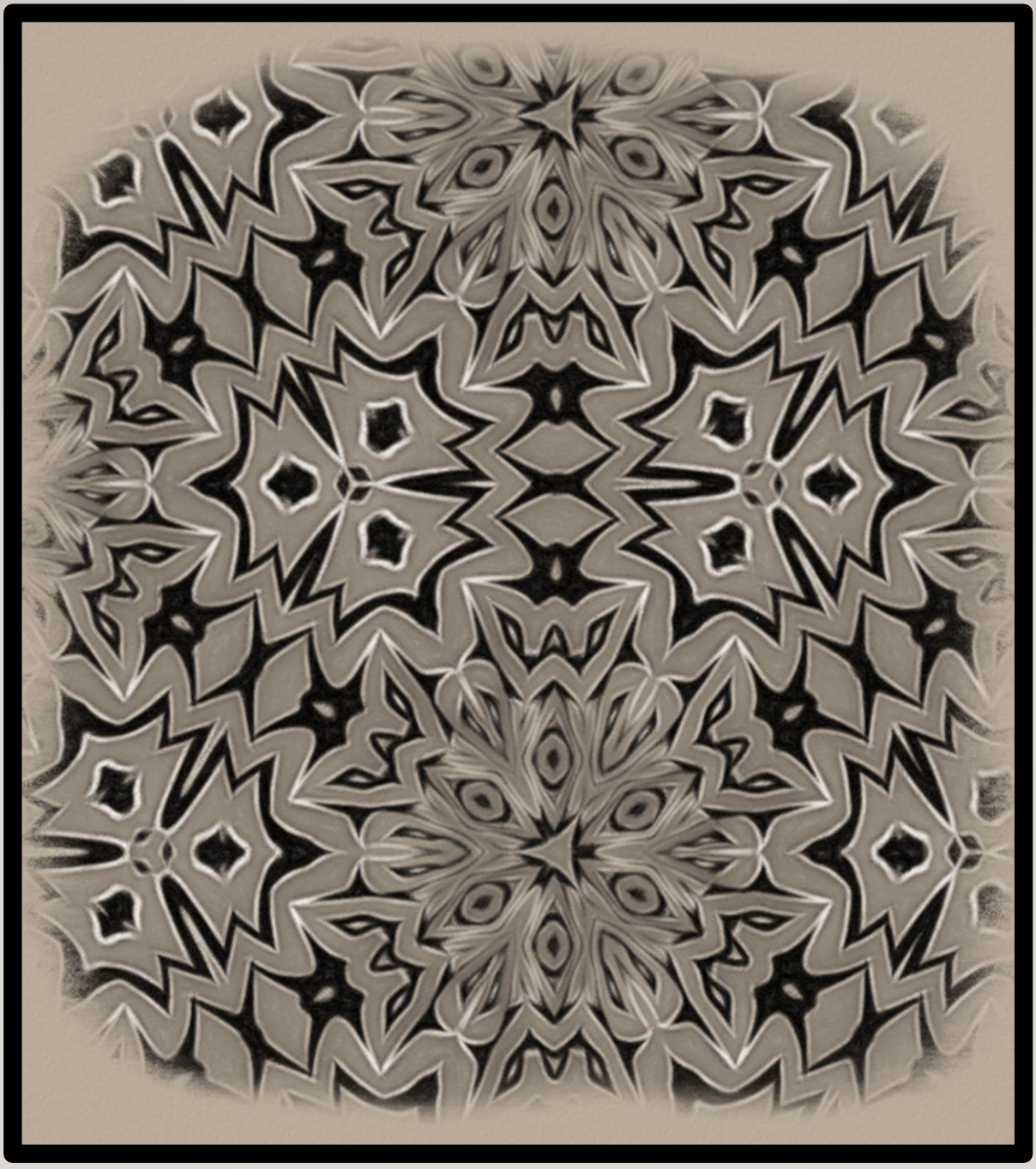

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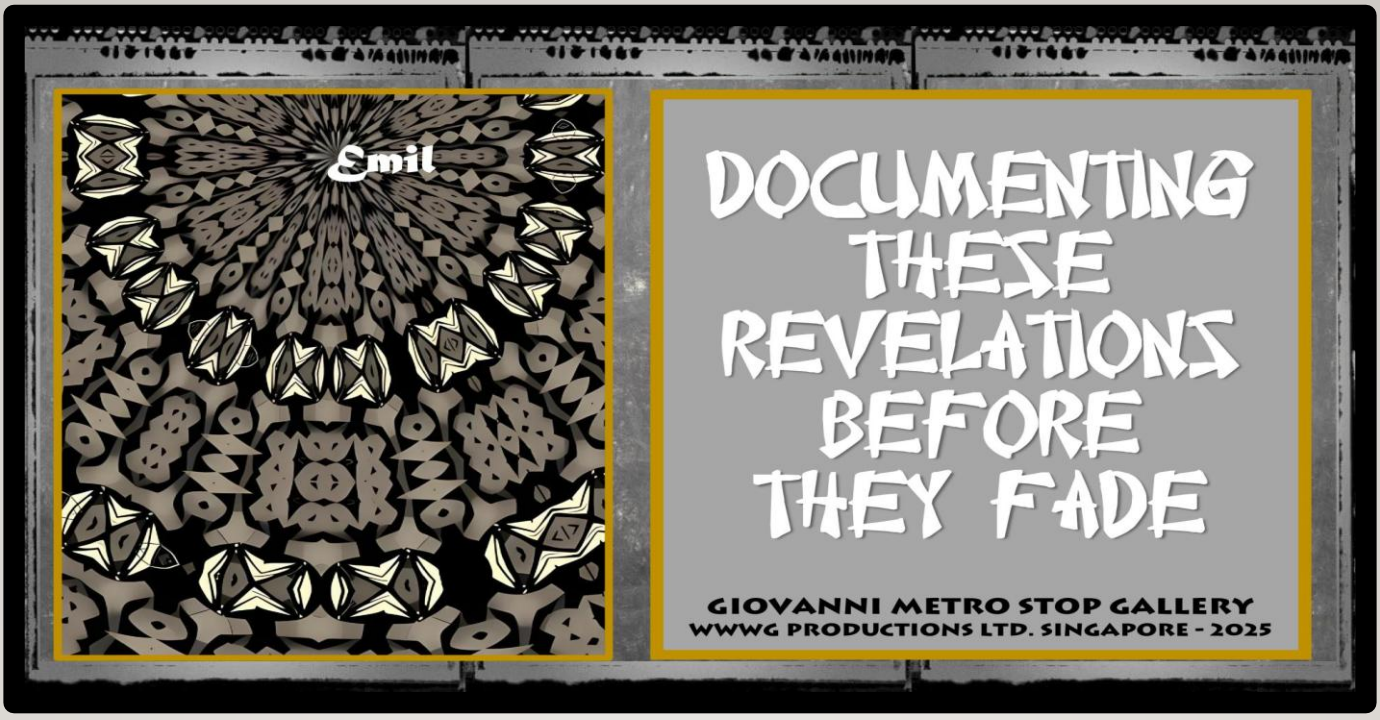

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